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George Eliot:  
Harmonizing and Synthesizing Idealism and Realism

张金凤 著

乔治·艾略特：  
理想主义与现实主义的“调和”

河南大学出版社

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## 序 言

这是张金凤同志的博士研究生毕业论文，参加评审和答辩的北京大学、中国人民大学、北京外国语大学的有关专家一致认为有出版的必要，今天解放军外国语学院帮助大家实现了这个愿望，我自感到欣慰。

对乔治·艾略特的研究是学术界普遍关注的一个课题，国外的研究者们在这一课题下已做了大量研究，因此超出前人是难度很大的课题。论文作者另辟蹊径，“在维多利亚中期，现实主义与理想主义之争的大背景下，探讨艾略特的理想主义因素”，并得出了正确的结论。作者在论文中坚持并运用了马克思主义哲学思想和美学观，对于所涉及的各个问题都作了深入细致的分析，不流于主观的推论或臆断。作者详细地占有丰富的资料，并恰当地运用这些资料来证明自己的观点，不论在观点上或材料上都是有说服力的，较之同类作品前进了一大步，达到了新的水平。这里我想引用答辩委员会关于建议授予张金凤同志英国文学研究博士学位的决议中的一段话，也许比我个人的评价更全面、更客观：“张金凤同志的论文以维多利亚中期现实主义为背景，用许多前

人未曾引证过的史料，重新审视了艾略特的后期作品中突显其中的理想主义因素，解决了维多利亚中期两大艺术潮流之争中的一些问题。文章有气势、有深度，并有开拓性和创造性。鉴于她在乔治·艾略特研究领域取得的成果和已具备的专业水平，建议授予她博士学位。”

本书作者的分析细腻，别有情趣，不仅在作品的开掘方面有开拓和创新，提出了一些新观点，而且在文艺思想的运用上也有自己的独特见解。

一百多年来，还没有人这样全面系统地论述过艾略特作品中的理想主义思想倾向，也没有人解释过这种思想倾向与她的现实主义承诺有何关系，更没有人研究过这种思想倾向与维多利亚时期的现实主义与理想主义之争的关系，所有这些都是这篇论文的创新点，而这主要是作者在博士研究生期间刻苦学习、独立钻研的结果。张金凤同志撰写的这篇论文现在与广大读者见面了，这本书作为高等院校研究乔治·艾略特的研究生或是英国文学爱好者的读物都是难得一见的作品。

这篇论文通过答辩会一年来，作者又依照各位专家的意见，进行了修改和加工，缺点和错误也依然难免，尚待学术界的同仁们继续深入研究，提出批评和指正。

赵太和

2005年10月



## 前 言

乔治·艾略特是维多利亚时期最重要的小说家之一。她不仅创作了被沃尔夫称之为“屈指可数的为成年人写的英语小说中的一部”的《米德尔马契》等重要小说，还为后人留下了大量评论和书信等文学遗产。艾略特研究在国外已有一百多年的历史，但在我国由于各种原因，这一研究比较滞后，发表的学术文章和专著屈指可数，并且大都集中于对她作品的道德主题、女权主义思想等有限的几个方面。在国外，随着现代批评理论的发展，对艾略特的研究从深度和广度上都得以拓展。本研究就是在这样的背景下，对艾略特常常被认为毋庸置疑的现实主义文学观进行探讨。

本书试图在维多利亚中期两种主要艺术模式（现实主义与理想主义）之间论争的大背景下探讨乔治·艾略特的理想主义因素。本书通过详尽分析其后期三部作品中日益突出的理想主义因素，证明艾略特并非如她早期所声称的她坚持毋庸置疑、无懈可击的现实主义美学观，而只是在实践中不自觉运用理论，况且随着她艺术手法的日渐成熟，她的美学观亦发生微妙的转变，发展成一种调和理想主义的“合成”现实主义。

有别于以往对艾略特后期作品中理想主义因素的批判，即认为它们背离了她早期所承诺的现实主义美学观，本书另辟蹊径，如果扭转这种思维习惯，从后期理想主义的角度审视早期作品，

可能会更有助于理解这种所谓的背离或偏转:艾略特早期镜像式的现实主义只是她有意识的道德选择和追求,虽然她本人可能并没有意识到,但她本质上是一个高度理想主义的作家。

全书共分七章。第一章简要介绍艾略特研究史。第二章回顾维多利亚时期著名的现实主义与理想主义之争,并将艾略特置于这一大背景中分析其现实主义承诺。创新之处在于,通过指出她早期现实主义色彩最浓厚的作品对其多次声明的现实主义美学观的违背以及理想主义因素的流露,证明她表面坚定的现实主义审美观的含混性与模糊性。第三章从三个方面讨论艾略特在不厌其烦地声明其现实主义立场的同时其作品中不断暴露理想主义倾向(她经常批判的艺术模式)的原因,以便对其作品中常被提及、却被简单化对待的情节主观臆想化和人物理想化进行更为系统的重新解读。第四、五、六章集中研究艾略特后三部小说中所体现的理想主义,既包括理想主义的人生观,也触及理想主义的艺术模式。第四章通过分析菲力克斯的政治理想主义、爱斯特对理想的逐渐接受和作者关于理想女性的观点,论证艾略特本人的理想主义倾向。不同于以往批评家们把这部小说仅视为下一部伟大作品的练笔或序曲的看法,本书强调它在体现作者理想主义这一职能方面与其他作品的同等重要性。第五章主要从三个角度剖析艾略特的理想主义因素:多萝西娅的道德理想、利德盖特的学术理想主义以及多萝西娅与威尔的备受争议的婚姻。以往批评家大多指责艾略特为理想化的女主人公安排的这场婚姻,本书则试图从它作为道德理想主义和审美理想主义完美结合的典范这一视角为其婚姻辩护。关于利德盖特故事的创新点在于本书将其命运同古典悲剧相提并论,以探讨天性中的理想主义追求与毫无诗意的社会环境的冲突。第六章评析艾略特的最后一部小说。首先,本书分析了艾略特所有人物中最理想化的德龙达以及理想人物激励他人、使之崇高的伟大力量,并指出,在实现“引起共鸣,

激发同情”这一贯串始终的写作目的方面，这部小说是艾略特所有作品的顶点；随后，本书着重探索艾略特如何通过小说的犹太主题阐发自己有关现代社会人类文化发展的思考和理想。陌生的犹太主题通常被批评家们或忽略或批判，本书分析这一主题与艾略特的创作意图以及与她越来越难以遏制的理想主义之间的密切联系，指出这一部分所发展的主题（“基于交流的分离”）实则是艾略特本人文化理想的象征。第六章也将对艾略特孜孜追求的感情与理性完美统一的理想加以论述。第七章为结论。

现实主义与理想主义并非僵硬的教条，而是艺术创作中的两种倾向，二者并不像理论显示得那样互相排斥与对立。艾略特的小说充分证明了这一点。她的创作实践既非她早期现实主义理论的简单应用，也非如她所期望的那样仅局限于对现实的细腻和逼真模仿。另外，她的逐渐演变的美学观同样不可忽视。综上所述，艾略特创作的一个重要特点就是不断增强的理想主义倾向与现实主义艺术观的相互调和。

通过探讨艾略特的创作实践与 19 世纪英国现实主义传统之间的对话关系，本书希望帮助读者全面理解艾略特，了解其创作如何加深了现实主义这一术语的内涵。

张金凤

2005 年 10 月

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## Chapter One Introduction

### 1.1 Review of George Eliot's Literary Reputation

George Eliot's critical reputation has had a checked history from the start. A bright beginning was made possible by using the pseudonym of George Eliot, shielding her true identity as the unmarried wife of George H. Lewes. Controversy and outrage accompanied her career, however, once Victorian society uncovered the real writer behind the veil. Because of her "immoral" relationship with Lewes, she faced virtual social ostracism, but her outstanding intellectual power, her insight into the basic human nature, her moral concern, her humor and irony, all this as reflected in her works at last earned her the recognition of literary critics, as well as the love of the reading public. During the later years of her life, she was generally seen as one of the most important Victorian novelists, a learned sage of the age, and a respected celebrity sought and lionized by her social betters. But, perhaps as is usual in the literary world, her reputation suffered a sudden decline several years after her death and into the early twentieth century, partly because of the rise of modernism which drew people's attention away from traditional realistic art, partly because the biography stitched together by her widower, John W. Cross, left out the most interesting parts of her life. Her literary

reputation reached its lowest point during the earlier decades of the twentieth century with Samuel C. Chew saying in *A Literary History of England*, “No other Victorian novelist of major rank is so little read today”.<sup>①</sup> A revival of interest in George Eliot’s novels began on the centenary of her birth with an essay in the *Times Literary Supplement* by Virginia Woolf. Gradually, a thin stream of studies appeared until they culminated in 1949 in Dr. F. R. Leavis’ publication of *The Great Tradition*, crystallizing George Eliot’s critical reputation. In 1956, Professor Gordon S. Haight published his meticulously edited work—the 7-volume *The George Eliot Letters* and then followed his *George Eliot—a Biography* in 1968, both of which helped to bring about the “post-1945 phenomenon” in Eliot studies.<sup>②</sup> A latest surge of interest in George Eliot was rekindled during the centenary of her death (1981). Since then, Eliot has been at the center of literary studies, with critics conducting various researches on various aspects of her work from different perspectives.

## 1.2 Review of George Eliot Criticism

### 1.2.1 Biographical Studies

There have been numerous biographical approaches to the study of George Eliot, including more than twenty full-length books, so this book will only list and introduce those most valued by the George Eliot scholars. The earliest notable one is Mathilde Blind’s *George*

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① See George H. Ford, ed., “George Eliot”, *Victorian Fiction: A Second Guide to Research* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1978), p.234.

② *Ibid.*, p.234.

*Eliot*. Blind's approach anticipates the volume by Leslie Stephen. Blind attempted to be thorough and accurate. The previously unpublished letters coupled with an emphasis on the feminist accomplishments of George Eliot give the biography a detailed and distinctive outlook. The enthusiasm of Blind, however, fashioned numerous overstatements such as, George Eliot was "the greatest realist...of her sex", in contrast to George Sand who was "the greatest idealist of her sex", (p.6) or that George Eliot combined in extraordinary ways intellectual power and "an unparalleled vision for the homely details of life". (p.5) Although limited by a lack of extensive data, Blind's well-researched book shows that the uniform and uneventful life of Eliot was a myth. Instead, Blind suggested a stressful, troubled existence for George Eliot but one that had a heroic if not transcendent quality.

John W. Cross's three-volume life of Eliot appeared two years later, and for many years remained the standard life account of her. Cross's intimacy with Eliot led him to preserve a distance between his role as a biographer and his subject in order to avoid subjectivity, resulting in the well-known truncation of her letters, the refusal to comment on various events in her life and a general avoidance of conclusions. The detail, arrangement, and precision of Cross's work anticipate the shape of Haight's work. Both stress the daily life, and both resist interpretation of her life and literature. They both emphasize Eliot's sensitivity to criticism as well as her diffident nature, and concentrate on the development of her intellect and character.

In 1902, Leslie Stephen published his version of George Eliot's life, in which Stephen also provided a criticism of her literary works. He was unafraid to criticize her characterization. He concluded that

the value of her novels consisted in that they were “implicit autobiography” and manifested a sympathetic nature united with “a large and tolerant intellect”, (p.201) anticipating several more recent biographies.

To counter the prejudices and errors of earlier lives, Gordon S. Haight spent years compiling and editing George Eliot’s letters and later published his study of Eliot’s life. It is meticulous in detail and scrupulous in documentation. Because of its inclusive and comprehensive record of her life, it is generally viewed as the definitive biography of Eliot, an outstanding contribution to Eliot scholarship. It is mainly from this version of Eliot’s life that I have found the evidence to support my hypothesis for Eliot’s realistic commitment and idealistic impulse.

Besides the above-mentioned ones, there are still some original and thus valuable biographies, notably Ruby Redinger’s *George Eliot: The Emergent Self* (1975) which complements Haight’s in that it provides a bold analysis of Eliot’s psychological dynamics which Haight eschews. Another noteworthy one is Valerie A. Dodd’s *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life* (1990), which mainly discusses her formation of ideas and beliefs.

As indicated by some biographers, one aspect of Eliot’s personality caught my attention: i.e. there were two most conspicuous trends in Eliot’s personality—on the one hand, there was her emotional, sympathetic and feminine nature: her need to have someone to lean on, her pursuit of the good and the ideal in life and in art; on the other hand, there was the highly intellectual, rational and philosophical moralist who strove for truth above all things in art and life. This seemingly paradoxical drives in her nature led to her unique art, on which critics have expressed different and even contradictory



views. Part of the task of the present study is to interpret this so-called split, comment on and refute some critics' relevant views with this paradoxical aspect of her nature in mind, and especially to explore the romantic idealism underlying her outlook and literary works.

### 1.2.2 Judicial Criticism

George Eliot criticism began almost the day after her *Scenes of Clerical Life* was published. Within one and a half centuries, a wealth of reviews, essays and books on her and aspects of her works have been committed to print. This book lists the most important ones in the following survey to support the position that the idealistic aspects of George Eliot have not been fully explored in relation to her realistic aesthetics and thus deserve more critical attention.

During the nineteenth century, her critics were mostly contemporary reviewers. R. H. Hutton reviewed almost all of George Eliot's novels and offered very enlightening views. But the most influential critics were Henry James and Leslie Stephen. Henry James actually marked the watershed of modern theory and practice of fiction criticism, and it was in the discussions of George Eliot's novels that the young James began his critical career. He was much concerned with the form of art, deploring the lack of form in her novels. His well-known nicknaming of Victorian serialized novels as "large loose baggy monsters"<sup>①</sup> reflects his dissatisfaction with the narrative form of such novels. According to James, the formal defect of Eliot's novels consisted in an over-expansive and discursive manner resulting in a lack of concentration and onward dramatic

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① See M. H. Abrams, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol.2 New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986 ), p.938.